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ABSTRACT

This book is designed to provide an introductory synthesis of the history and sociocultural evolution of Native American peoples in the Far West, with strong emphasis on California and Nevada. The book focuses particularly on those historical and cultural experiences likely to have contributed to the present conditions of Native communities and individuals, and on basic concepts related to Indian studies and improvement of Indian education. The book intends to counter widespread "mis-education" about the Native experience in North America, which leaves most non-Indians with a vague idea that Indians were "wronged" at some remote time but no accurate notion of what actually occurred or of the continuing reality of Indian life today. Chapters cover: (1) historical, cultural, and biological (genetic) legacies of American Indians and their significance for U.S. society; (2) the evolution of Native California and Nevada (origin of first Westerners, ancient American cultures, cultural elaboration and variation in the Far West, Spanish invasion and Native response, Mexican-Indian period, Anglo-American invasion); (3) the conquest and accompanying powerlessness and poverty, 1850s-1920s (seizure of Indian lands, labor exploitation, early treaties later ignored by federal and state governments, resistance and survival strategies, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian schools and literacy); (4) the Native awakening, 1920-1980s (struggles for equality of citizenship, for land and compensation, against discrimination and poverty, and for better education); (5) basic concepts for understanding Native history and culture; (6) a community-responsive multicultural approach to Indian education (principles, suggestions for personnel training, suggestions for teachers and administrators); and (7) extensive bibliography. Appendix includes the linguistic classification of California and Nevada Indians, with maps. Also included are notes and an index. (SV)

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